THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) Department of Consumer Affairs monitors the retail prices of 14 essential commodities. Three commodities — groundnut oil, onions and salt, out of the fourteen commodities monitored — recorded year-on-year inflation of 25 per cent and above. Retail prices of these 14 commodites in Delhi and increase in prices in last one year are indicated in Table below:

Price trend in Delhi of 14 essential commodities (Rs./Kg.) as on 15 November, 2007 and per cent variation over a year ago

	Commodity	Current Price 15.11.2007	Retail Prices (Rs./Kg.) 1 week back 08.11.2007	1 month back 15.10.2007	3 month back 14.08.2007	1 year back 15.11.2006	Annual per cent change on 15.11.2007 over 15.11.06
1	Rice	16.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	14.00	14.29
2	Wheat	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	0.00
3	Atta	13.00	13.00	13.00	13.00	13.00	0.00
4	Gram dal	35.00	34.00	34.00	34.00	41.00	-14.63
5	Tur dal	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	34.00	17.65
6	Sugar	17.00	16.50	16.00	16.00	20.50	-17.07
7	Groundnut oil*	120.00	119.00	118.00	115.00	89.00	34.83
8	Mustard Oil*	63.00	62.00	62.00	62.00	53.00	18.87
9	Vanaspati	61.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	56.00	8.93
10	Tea (Loose)	110.00	10[illegible]00	08.00	106.00	105.00	4.76
11	Milk@	20.00	20.00	19.00	19.00	17.00	17.65
12	Potato	13.00	14.00	15.50	15.00	13.00	0.00
13	Onion	15.00	17.00	22.00	16.00	9.00	66.67
14	Salt (Packed)	10.00	10.00	10.00	9.00	8.00	25.00

*Refined oil @ per litre

Containment of inflation remains high on the agenda of the Government as inflation hurts everybody, particularly the poor, whose incomes are typically not indexed to prices. Government's anti-inflationary policies include strict fiscal and monetary discipline, effective management of supply-demand through liberal import of essential commodities and strengthening of public distribution system for foodgrains.

Guidelines for realizing loans by Banks

*64 MS. MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had issued guidelines against the banks whose agents have allegedly been found harassing the customers for realizing the loans;

(b) if so, the details of the protection given to the customers and the agencies where such complaints for redressal could be lodged;

(c) whether such guidelines put onus on the concerned banks; and

(d) if so, what steps have been taken against the banks in the recent cases of harassment as reported in the media?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) To protect the rights of bank customers, prevent their harassment, etc. steps taken by Government of India/Reserve Bank of India (RBI), *inter-alia*, include the following:—

(i) RBI has issued instructions/guidelines to banks on 'Managing Risks and Code of Conduct in Outsourcing of Financial Services'.

(ii) RBI has formulated the "Fair Practices Code for Lenders".

(iii) RBI has issued instructions to All Commercial Banks/NBFCs (excluding RRBs) regarding Credit Card Operations.

(iv) Further, the Code of Banks' Commitments to Customers formulated by Banking Codes and Standard Board of India (BCSBI) provides, *inter-alia*, that the collection policy of the bank be built on courtesy, fair treatment and persuasion and the bank follows a security repossession policy in consonance with the law.

(v) The Indian Banks Association (IBA) has formulated a "Model Code for collection of dues and repossession of security" as also a "Fair Practice Code for credit card operations" which has been recommended to banks for adoption and implementation.

(b) In case of violation of the said guidelines, the customers aggrieved can lodge complaints with RBI's Customer Service Department, Banking Division of Department of Financial Services, Public Grievances Cell of concerned banks, Banking Ombudsman and District Consumer Forum. Further, the aggrieved can also lodge complaints with local police.

(c) The guidelines issued by RBI clearly stipulate that the banks would be responsible for all acts of omission or commission of their agents. RBI reserves the right to impose penalty on a bank for violation of guidelines under the provision of Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

(d) RBI takes up the complaints with the concerned banks and cautions them to ensure that such incidences do not recur in future. In the Mid-Term Review of Annual Policy Statement (dated October 30, 2007), RBI has observed that in view of the rise in the number of litigations against banks for engaging recovery agents in the recent past, it is felt that the adverse publicity could result in serious reputational risk for the banking sector as a whole. RBI has urged banks to follow prescribed specific considerations while engaging recovery agents and has clarified that complaints received regarding abusive practices followed by a bank's recovery agent would invite serious supervisory disapproval. RBI would consider imposing a temporary ban (or even a permanent ban in case of persistent abusive practices) for engaging recovery agents on those banks where strictures have been passed/penalties have been imposed by a High Court/Supreme Court or against its Directors/Officers with regard to the abusive practices followed by their recovery agents.

Extension of services of small aircrafts in Uttarakhand, H.P. and N.E.

†*65. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to extend the services of small aircrafts in various parts of the country, particularly in the States of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh (H.P.) and North-East (N.E.) on regular basis;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.